

Virginia Agricultural BMP Advisory Committee
Meeting 9:30 a.m., August 18, 2011
DRAFT Summary

TAC members in attendance:

Member	Representing	Member	Representing
Megen Dalton	VACDE	Tony Pane	DCR
Mark Hollberg	DCR	Wayne Turley	SR Con. Tech.
Diane Beyer	Regulatory Local Assistance	Emily Horsley	FSA
Robert Bradford	Area II Chair (Proxy)	Keith Seward	Area VI Chair
Todd Groh	VDOF	Mike Altizer	Area IV Chair (Proxy)
Tom Turner	CB Cons. Tech.	Libby Norris	CBF
Mike Foreman	DCR	Tim Sexton	DCR
Stephanie Martin	DCR	Sharyl Walker	NRCS
Marc Puckett	DGIF	Darrell Marshall	VDACS
Chad Wentz	NRCS	Ward Robens	Area I Chair

Participants:

Jim Tate Hanover/Caroline SWCD	Debbie Cross	DCR
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The meeting began at 9:35 AM. Gary Moore led and facilitated the discussion that followed. A summary of discussion topics, action items, and significant conclusions are as follows:

Meaghann Terrien of the Three Rivers SWCD has resigned from the TAC. She represented the Chesapeake Bay SWCD conservation staff. Mr. Tom Turner of John Marshall SWCD has agreed to fill this position. Mr. Turner has been involved with the TAC previously having served on a number of subcommittees and has participated in numerous TAC meetings, where his input has always been appreciated. He was welcomed as an official member of the TAC.

The draft summary of the March 7, 2011 TAC meeting was reviewed and approved with some typographical changes noted.

2012 Ag. BMP Manuals were offered to any individual that had not received a manual through normal distribution channels.

- ◆ Stephanie Martin provided an update on the voluntary BMP Pilot Project; six districts have been chosen to work on the voluntary BMP pilot project; Blue Ridge, Holston River, Shenandoah Valley, Three Rivers, Thomas Jefferson and Virginia Dare Districts have all signed grant agreements with DCR to develop a recruitment and assessment procedure to report voluntary BMPs implemented after January 1, 2006 that meet NRCS standards and specifications. These BMPs will be reported to the Chesapeake Bay Program for input to the watershed model in order for VA to receive associated nutrient and sediment reduction credit. The term functional equivalent (FE) is being discussed with EPA. These are bmps that do not meet NRCS standards and specifications but are functionally equivalent to the designated practice. These six pilots will be collecting information about those bmps voluntarily installed that do not meet standards and

specifications but are functionally equivalent. Documentation will be required on these functional equivalents and will be submitted to EPA for their review and determination for bay credits.

- ◆ **Resource Management Plans** (originated as SB 1830 sponsored by Delegate Scott); Stephanie Martin provided an update on the Resource Management Plan activities. One approach would allow the development and implementation of Resource Management Plans to confer a “safe harbor” for agricultural land operators. RMP’s that implement the appropriate BMPs identified in the RMP for that operation would indicate the operation is compliant with all TMDL requirements and would be granted “Safe Harbor”. A Regulatory Advisory Panel (RAP) has been formed and has met one time. The RAP has already subdivided into three subcommittees and is meeting presently on their topics of interest (Assessment, Plan Development and Compliance). This legislation requires a semi-regulatory process that will require public input and 2 approvals by the S&WCB. The present goal is to have draft regulations ready for Soil and Water Conservation board approval at the Dec. 07, 2011 board meeting.

Old Business

- ◆ **NRCS Programs:** Overall NRCS has obligated approximately \$30M worth of conservation contracts during FY 2011.

- CBWI ~\$16 M obligated in 500 contracts that cover 5,600 acres. A \$1.7M backlog exists.
- EQIP ~ \$12M Obligated in 330 contracts. A \$13M backlog exists.
- WHIP ~ \$648K obligated in 69 contracts that cover 3,500 acres.
- CSP ~ 1.2 M obligated in 1,000 contracts that cover 140,000 acres

FY 2012 outlook: NRCS is anticipating funding cuts as this is the last year of the 2008 Farm Bill and federal financial resource are projected to be extremely tight this year.

- CBWI anticipated funding will be less than the \$11M VA received when CBWI was \$53M total
- VA NRCS intends to strike orchard pest management, and ground water conservation categories from funding considerations.

NRCS Headquarters is grouping states by Farm Production Region, and developing payment standards for the 15 most used practices standards (flat rate) nationally. All practice standards are anticipated to be included in these payment standards by FY 2013.

VA NRCS is looking at heavy use areas around poultry houses and the risk assessment for animal waste criteria to be modified early in FY 2012.

- ◆ **Ag. BMP Tracking Program**

- CEF calculations have been modified
- Reporting issues are being fixed
- Working on modifications to report voluntary BMPs trying to meet September. 30th deadline to push out for comments from VBMP pilot SWCDs
- Existing contract with WorldView ends 10/3/2011
- Will need to start modification for collection of RMPs
 - What, how, when will need input from RAP

- ◆ **DGIF Wildlife BMPs** cost shared in support of the (Quail Action Plan)

- 5 Private Lands Biologist (PLB) are on board, the positions are being shared with NRCS as part of a 5 year agreement.
- PLBs are involved in T&ES assessments and Environthons
- Have expanded quail counties to 15 (all counties in all quail districts.)
- Allocations authorized by DGIF Board to SWCDS = \$900K 1st year; \$700K 2nd year; \$600 K 3rd year

Q: How long before you start to notice a population increase

A: We anticipate that a noticeable population increase would take 5 to 6 years.

New Business

- ◆ A distribution of submitted letters and a discussion of the received suggested changes for inclusion in 2012 Program of Work was initiated. A two step process was taken the first step identified and consolidated the items to be included in the program of work. Secondly each item was assigned to an appropriate subcommittee and the subcommittee members were identified. The following items were outcomes or items of note from this discussion:
 - Libby Norris wants the TAC to align the program priorities to possible WIP II practices.
 - Two submitted suggestions were referred to the full TAC to be included during future TAC meetings as separate agenda items for discussion by the whole TAC.
 - Change WP-4 and WP-4B practices to priority practices from current status of Base practice. This discussion should include the 80% - 20% Base - Priority practice funding split and/or the use of a separate pot of money for animal waste practices.
 - Change carryover time frame from 1 year to two years for animal waste practices.
 - The Nutrient Management Subcommittee composed of: Tim Sexton (chair), Katie Frazier, Daryl Marshall, Wade Thomason, Ron Wood, Franklin Jackson, Jim Tate, and John Fallon. The Chair will contact any suggested members that may not be aware they have been so honored.
 - Will consider changing Nutrient Management plans to scenario based plan.
 - The Stream Exclusion subcommittee did not identify a chair and is composed of Megen Dalton, Richard Chafin (Gary will call to confirm), Chad Wentz, Wayne Turley, Robert Bradford, Tony Pane, Libby Norris, Emily Horsley, J. B. Daniels (Gary to call & confirm), and Emily Nelson (previous chair, Gary to call)
 - Will consider the interactions of the VACS SL-6, SL-7, and CREP.
 - The cover crop subcommittee is composed of: Megen Dalton, Chris Lawrence (NRCS), Gary Moore, Jim Tate, Wade Thomason (VT), Paul Davis (VT retired), and Mark Alley (VT) and Kelly Snoddy, district manager from area of problem with SL-8B harvest. No chair was identified, Gary Moore will contact any suggested members that may not be aware they have been so honored.
 - Will consider:
 - a) Removal of the \$10/acre bonus for use of SL-8H harvestable cover crop as feed stock for biofuels.
 - b) Removal of harvest option due to drought from SL-8B practice.
 - c) Removal of the “no tillage of any nature” language from the SL-15A & CCI-CNT practices.

Agency Updates

Chesapeake Bay Foundation CBF

The Farmers to the Bay trip is scheduling the fall 3 day trip to Tangier Island and has a few slots open for farmers and agency staff. CBF will be conducting a one day fishing trip to the lower bay this fall and another 3-day trip to Tangier in the spring. They also will conduct a one day canoe trip on Smith Creek in the spring.

DCR Division of Stormwater Management Local Implementation Program: Ms. Diane Beyer, former District Manager from the Tri-County City SWCD, is now representing this group at the TAC. Representatives from this program are visiting with all localities that have identified Resource Protection Areas (RPA) about Agricultural issues in their localities, and ways to meet WIP II reductions.

Virginia Department of Forestry

Todd Groh reported that the Longwood University "Lands for Tomorrow" conference was well received. Regional follow-up meetings are currently under way. The plan is to only have the regional meetings next year. The Great Dismal Swamp is burning again and will need a significant rainfall event to stop it. Restoration of Timberland (RT) with a budget of \$1.5M implemented approximately \$1M in cost share during the last fiscal year.

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services VDACS

The two additional Ag Stewardship positions that were authorized by the General Assembly have been filled; Greg Barts and Tim Higgs have accepted the positions both come from SWCDs where they were involved with ASA complaint investigations previously. This experience will allow them to hit the ground running so to speak.

ASA complaints in 2011:

47 complaints, 19 unfounded

18 founded, 9 dismissed, 1 outstanding

Beef operations =17 complaints, dairy operations =2 complaints

Cropland complaints up from previous years

Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries DGIF

Marc Puckett noted that his agency has been reorganized and he will provide a new organizational chart to Gary that can be distributed.

Department of Conservation and Recreation DCR

Mike Foreman noted that \$50.3 M had been deposited into the Water Quality Improvement Fund. Both Point sources and non point source reduction programs are funded through the WQIF. Some of those dollars should make it to the Ag. BMP program in coming years.

Concerns from the Floor

None noted

**The Next TAC meeting will be Tuesday October 25 9:30 AM DOF Training Room
Charlottesville, VA**